

THE ROAD TO A PURE HEART

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

RIGHTEOUS COMMITMENT RELATIONSHIP

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Matthew 5:6; 13:44-46

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help the students understand their commitment to God and recognize the place he must occupy in their lives

MEMORY VERSE

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled” (Matthew 5:6, NIV*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

The parables we’ll study in this lesson represent the most important thing in life: a deep committed relationship with God. This relationship is not just another activity; it is a central point of our entire existence. Students of this age are in a stage of development in which their conscience begins to offer them misleading options. Many times they feel truly guilty as a result of bad decisions made. We often attribute the work of our conscience to the voice of the Holy Spirit, who gently worries us to help us consider our actions and do the right thing.

The Bible speaks in many places about purity of heart. Preadolescents may feel that this is an unattainable goal; but it is simply a call to trust in Christ, to live as he lived. The call to live in purity is both a promise and a commandment.

The most significant goal you can have as a teacher is to help our preadolescents to make a decision for Christ before they finish primary school and enter into the uncertain terrain of adolescence. Today’s lesson is an opportunity for our preadolescents to examine their relationship with Christ and instill in them the desire and power to have a pure heart.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

Read Matthew 5:8. The idea of purity runs through the entire Bible and is one of the most unifying themes. Purity ... it often makes us think about acting in a right and pleasant way to God. But it also includes the idea of being complete. Being pure of heart implies the divine cleansing performed by God that, as a result, produces unity of purpose and desire. Remember that the heart was considered in biblical times to be the center of a person. In A Dictionary of the Bible & Christian Doctrine the heart is described as "the inner person". "It is the person as he or she really is. It includes the mind, will, emotions, desires and plans." The heart represents the purest essence of who and what a person is.

Many times we're aware of the inconstancy of our heart in its desire to be what God aspires it to be. Sometimes the confusion comes through temptations. Other times, our life is full of good things that please us and that slowly distances us from the Lord. Jesus reminds us that the greatest treasure we can possess is our relationship with God: a heart focused on the purpose of living with Jesus as Lord. A pure heart shows evidence of a total commitment and full communion with God.

Read Matthew 13:44-46. This chapter is full of very colorful parables. The two included in the passage of our study, despite being among the shortest, are significant portraits of the value of the kingdom of God, another way of referring to our relationship with Christ.

These two parables are similar in meaning and basically lead us to the same point. Whether we find the treasure by chance (hidden in a field), or after a careful search (the pearl of great price), the character of each story shows that in life, there are things that have an incalculable value that cannot be measured in human terms. All that we could have or get is nothing compared to the value of what was found. Did you ever experience those moments of lucidity, of clear vision in which God shows you the wonders of his love and grace? You desire, like that of the people in these parables, is focused on rejoicing over the incredible treasure of your relationship with God.

A key point in these narratives is that when the kingdom of God (the treasure or the pearl) is found, whoever finds it must always make a choice. We must choose whether or not we'll make the effort to obtain it. The cost is very high, in this case it implies giving one's whole life. But the value of this decision is incalculable. The parables teach us that, although the cost is high, it is well worth it.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

The hidden treasure

Before the students arrive, hide a real coin or paper currency bill somewhere in the room. Draw a bill or coin like the one you hid. Show the students the picture while explaining that they should search for the hidden treasure, which is a replica of the one in your hands. If students do not find the coin or currency, then you should give them some clues. If someone finds it, let them keep it. Consider having a small prize (sweet) for the rest of the group.

Ask: "How many of you knew that I really had hidden money? How many of you thought someone would get to keep the money? Based on the answers students give, choose some of the following questions:

How much interest / desire did you have in finding the "treasure"? Explain.

How did the level of interest in the "treasure" affect the way you sought it?

What would you have done if you had known that the money was real and that you could keep it?

What kind of treasure would you consider valuable enough to search with all your heart and persistence?

Point out: "Our Bible study refers to finding a hidden treasure. What kind of treasure do you think the Bible is talking about?"

Mural - What is most important?

You'll need: magazines with abundant illustrations, scissors, poster paper or large size cards, glue, markers. While students arrive in the room, have them search through the magazines you brought to the group and cut out figures of things or situations that society / people value very much. Then they are to stick them on a poster to make a mural. Have them leave a space to place the title.

At the end of the mural creating, mention that everything there are things or situations that people value. Ask: "Which of these things or situations are the most important to you? Is there anything you did not paste on this poster that has more value for you? What is it?" (They may mention family, friends, love of loved ones, health or studies. Accept their answers.)

Continue: "Jesus has something to teach us today, something that has great value. It is so high that there is nothing else to which we can compare it.

Distribute Student Activity Sheet #412-A and #412-B.

TEACH THE LESSON

Pure hearts and priceless treasures

Ask the students to read Matthew 5:8. Ask them: "What do you think Jesus intends to teach us in this Beatitude? A pure heart is a heart that has been given completely to God. A person with a pure heart desires an integral relationship with the Lord more than anything else in the world. These people give everything they have in life to live as God expects them to do. With God's help, their hearts remain clean and free from sin.

On one occasion Jesus told two stories to illustrate the importance of desiring a pure heart. Let's look at these parables.

Divide into two groups and assign one of the stories to each group: "Buried Treasure" and "The Pearl of Great Price." Their task is to look for a way to present their story to the whole group. Ask them to also read the biblical passage where the parable is. When they finish they can present their story read, with mimics, like drama, etc.

"Buried Treasure"

A man was preparing his field to sow the seeds. The dirt was good and fertile. Suddenly, his shovel hit something hard. "How strange," the man thought, "it doesn't seem to be a rock."

He knelt down and with his hands he removed the dirt with great care. When he finished removing the dirt, he was filled with amazement and joy at what he had discovered . . . an unimaginable treasure! "If I worked in the field every day for the next 1,000 years, I couldn't earn enough to equal the value of this treasure," he thought.

He knew what he had to do ... he buried the treasure again, very carefully, covering it well. He knew the law: if he took the treasure now, he couldn't keep it. By law, it belonged to the owner of the land, and he knew that sooner or later, the owner would claim the treasure as his own.

Who knows what this man would have to do to buy the property?

"I must sell everything I have," he thought. Maybe he would have to ask for money from everyone he knew. But he knew what he was doing. And he was willing to do anything to get that treasure, because he knew that the treasure would change the rest of his life.

After buying the land, he returned to the place where he had found the treasure, dug it up, and was happy because now the treasure belonged to him. (This story is based on Matthew 13:44.)

"The Pearl of Great Price"

This story describes a person with a different kind of work. He was a businessman, not someone who worked the land. His eyes were trained to find small flaws and wonderful features in precious pearls.

"I spend all day observing pearls, always looking for the best ones."

The wrinkles in his eyes and on his forehead showed that he had been doing this work for many years. But his eyes were still very effective in finding beauty in the perfect pearls. One day, while searching in a container full of pearls, he saw it! A pearl so bright and beautiful that even this man, who had seen several thousand of them, could not believe what he was seeing.

"This was it! The most beautiful and incredible pearl I had ever seen!" He knew its value, and he was willing to do anything to buy it. So, he went and sold absolutely everything he had. Then he ran back and bought the pearl.

(This story is based on Matthew 13:45-46.)

At the end of the presentations, have them look at and answer the following questions.

What differences exist between these two parables? (The treasures are different: a treasure is hidden underground; the pearl is possibly for sale.)

How are they similar? (The two men have great interest, one in the treasure and the other in the pearl; both the hidden treasure and the pearl are very important to them. They both sell everything they have to get the treasure and the precious pearl.)

Why do you think Jesus compared the Kingdom of God to the treasure and the pearl? (Explain to the students what the kingdom of God is: it is wherever the Lord is the King. God reigns in the lives and hearts of the people who love and obey him, that is, Christians. Jesus says that belonging to God's kingdom and having a relationship with him is like looking for a treasure so great that we would give everything we have in life to possess it.)

What do these stories tell us about ourselves as the children of God? (We hope that everyone grasps the main idea. That is, being

in the kingdom of God, and having a relationship with him, is the most important treasure we can possess in life.)

Have the students say with you the Beatitude found in Matthew 5:8. Ask them: "How does this Beatitude relate to the two parables that we're studying? (Those who are pure in heart will see the Lord. They'll do the seemingly impossible to be part of the kingdom of God, and they'll love and obey Him.)

Explain: "This Beatitude has a promise for now and for the future. People who love God will 'see' him in this life. They'll see the love, care and power of God every day. They'll also 'see God' in the future in heaven. That's why having a pure heart is a guarantee for joy."

CONNECT THE LESSON

Am I pure in heart?

Have the students answer the following questions.

Remember the last time you had some free time. What did you do?

What are the four activities that you spend the most time doing during the week?

What are the five most important things in your life?

What is it that makes you happy?

Allow everyone to participate by sharing their answers if they want to. Ask questions and make comments to make sure the students understood the lesson.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

[Download Suggestions for Bible Memorization PDF](#)

Encourage the students to say the memory verse by themselves. By this session they should know the passage very well. If there are students who still do not know it or who attend for the first time, ask those who already know it to help them. You can organize a competition between girls and boys.

Distribute Student Activity Sheet #412-C and help the students connect "righteousness" and "pure heart".

WRAP-UP

Pray

Pray for the students, that they can enjoy a pure heart at this early age. Remember, as a teacher, the greatest responsibility that you have is to lead the students to the Lord. This lesson is very appropriate to invite them to accept the Lord as the King of their lives.

Encourage

Prepare an appropriate chorus or hymn to encourage the group to practice today's teaching.

Invite

After the prayer and the hymn, say goodbye to the students with a warm invitation for the next session, the last of this unit.

You may want to prepare a small function to celebrate the students with good attendance and those who have accepted Christ in their hearts.